Assistance by Rashtriya Awas Bank in Assam

†1009. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of financial assistance provided by Rashtriya Awas Bank during the last three years to the people of Assam for the construction of houses; and

(b) the extent of success achieved by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Rashtriya Awas Bank [National Housing Bank (NHB)] does not provide direct financial assistance to the individuals for the construction of houses. However, NHB have extended re-finance assistance of Rs. 42.96 lakhs through the Primary Lending Institutions *i.e.* approved Housing Finance Companies for construction of 96 dwelling units during the last three years in the state of Assam.

Strike in banks

1010. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the frequency of strikes in nationalised banks since 1999-2000 as on date;

(b) the main causes of strike and remedial measures taken in each case; and

(c) the stern action proposed to be taken by Government against the concerned bank employees who are found involved in such strikes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Indian Banks' Association (IBA) have reported that during the year 1999 and 2000, the Bank Employees/Officers went on Industrial Level strike 5 times.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) The main causes of the strikes *inter-alia* were related to settlement of wage revision *w.e.f.* 1.11.1997, privatisation/reduction of Government's shareholding of public sector banks and introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). The following remedial measures were taken.

The matter relating to the wage revision was amicably resolved by signing a Joint Note and Bipartite Settlement by IBA and industry level unions. On the question of privatisation of banks, it is proposed only to amend the Banking Companies (Acquisition & Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970/1980 with a view to modifying the stipulation of minimum prescribed Government shareholding in nationalised banks from 51% to 33%, to enable nationalised banks to raise capital from the market without affecting the public sector character of these banks. A Bill in this regard has been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance. As regards Voluntary Retirement Scheme, the same was voluntarily in nature and there was a good response from the employees.

(c) The Banks deal with the absence of employees on account of strike, under the principle of 'No work no pay' and deduct wages accordingly. Besides, disciplinary and other actions as warranted under the circumstances are also taken.

NPAs Against Private Steel Companies

1011. SHRI P. N. SIVA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, 'FIs, promoters busy restructuring steel loans to avoid NPAs' appearing in the Indian Express dated the 20th August, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to recover the loan from the private steel companies due to which NPAs have accumulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) Government has seen the news-item captioned "FIs Promoters busy restructuring steel